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Empowering the National Parliament to Promote Good Governance for Sustainable Development: Case of Democratic Republic of Congo

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Abstract

The purpose of this article was to investigate the determinants of an empowered parliament for the promotion of good governance and sustainable development. It had three objectives, to: investigate the determinants of an empowered parliament; establish how an empowered parliament promotes good governance and sustainable development; finally, find out the challenges in empowering the national parliament for good governance and sustainable development and a qualitative study was adopted to study the National Parliament of the DRC Congo. Among the sovereign countries in the world, the National Parliament is considered as one of the most fundamental public institutions charged with the responsibility of promoting a democratic system of governance and sustainable development. For that matter; there is a strong link between empowered national parliaments; good governance and democracy; and sustainable development. Furthermore, countries that are developed have discovered that empowered national parliaments are the foundation on which good governance and socio-economic development. For example, the European Union (EU) and World Bank, argue that empowered parliaments are critical for the establishment of democratic systems which serve as sustainable pathway for the improvement of good governance, national unity and integration; peaceful coexistence; fair distribution of national resources; social justice and equity; and finally, the promotion socio-economic development. The article concludes that empowered national parliaments are autonomous, adequately staffed; continually make good laws that benefit of their citizens; they are committed to the furtherance of country's economy and development; lastly, they have access and control over national budgets. Moreover, empowered parliament regulates the other public organizations in the country; for instance, through the giving oversight and regulations. Finally, empowered national parliaments are self-regulating and governing; for example, they independently control their calendar of activities; and regulation of the activities of political parties in a transparent and accountable way. The study recommends that thorough vetting be applied to every person aspiring the work of Member of Parliament. All the administrative equipment like offices, computers, security, vehicles, offices, and adequate staff be given to the National Parliament members to enable them to discharge their duties effectively. Financial and functional autonomy must be given to the Parliament for a smooth running of the institution.

Key Words: Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Empowering; National Parliament; Good governance; Sustainable Development

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Introduction

Parliament is one of the most important public institutions in any given society: it is the voice of the electorate which legislates as well as oversee the Executive. It is only when parliament is empowered with proper tools that it is going to carry out its mandate. Bressanelli, Koop & Reh (2016) observe that the country's national parliament stands out as one of the most fundamental and topmost public institutions charged with the responsibility of promoting a democratic system of governance and sustainable development. A growing number of literature (Datta & Rabbany, 2016; Adiputri, 2018; Bonenberg & Kaplinski, 2018) indicate that a strong link exists between empowered national parliaments and good governance; and the realization of sustainable development. Moreover, developed countries have discovered that empowered national parliaments are the foundation on which good governance and socio-economic development are built (Brack, 2018; World Bank, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

The Democratic Republic of Congo has been endowed with a vast, fertile, and very rich land in terms of mineral resources, forests, lakes, rivers, national parks, man power, among many other resources that are unfortunately poorly managed. The DRC has everything any nation would need to ensure development, yet the country is ranked as one the most underdeveloped and fragile nations on earth (World Bank, 2018). A lack of proper governance of these vast resources has resulted in low development indices (Maupin, 2017). Despite its abundance of water and fertile land, the DRC imports flour, rice, and maize from Pakistan, Zambia, Tanzania, and other countries (Eric, Xu, Yu, Wang, Ahmed, Darith, & Eliane, 2017; Sondi, Kalambaie, & Mafwila, 2018). The natural mineral deposits are grossly mismanaged with no clear accountability on how they are exploited. They are neither sustainably exploited nor have a majority of citizens benefited from this resource. Poor governance, low development levels, food insecurity, low living standards, armed conflicts, and a lack of the rule of law has in recent years seen a large number of Congolese refugees running away from the country to seek refuge in other more stable and developed countries (Zihindula, Weitz, & Akintola, 2015).

A study by Englebert (2014) on governance in the DRC found that government officials were heavily entangled in predatory rule and used their positions to appropriate and accumulate public resources. A study by Gouzou (2012) concluded that bad governance was widely accepted as one of the major causes of conflict, underdevelopment and marginalization in the DRC. Chamber's (2013) study on governance in the DRC revealed that the country had never had any form of mandatory social contract in which accountability and good governance practices were demonstrated by the state. The Democratic Republic of Congo thus faces massive structural constraints on governance which include severe levels of poverty, very low levels of socio-economic development, poor infrastructural levels, a large and difficult political territory that is sparsely populated, a deeply rooted culture of clientelism, a poorly educated workforce, decades of burdensome and violent conflicts, daily violence in the conflict-ridden parts of the country, and a total absence of trust by a majority of Congolese, in their institutions and state agents (Bertelsmann

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Stiftung, 2018). It is on the basis of the foregoing concerns that this study aims to identify the underlying causes of weak governance in order to come up with appropriate mechanisms that can bring healing to the DRC and the Congolese masses through empowering the National Parliament.

Research Objectives

This study was guided by the following specific objectives, to:

- 1) Investigate what the members of parliament doing to empower DR Congo
- 2) Determine the challenges faced by the members of parliament in DR Congo when attempting to empower the national parliament
- 3) Establish how effective is the empowered national parliament in promoting sustainable development in DR Congo

Literature Review

What is Empowerment?

The term ‘empowerment’ is regarded as possessing a variety of meanings and flavors that encapsulate it. The socio-cultural or political context in which it is used largely determines the type of definition assigned to it (Chaudhuri, 2016). Burgeoning scholarly definitions of what empowerment means exemplify the varying meanings it portrays to different contexts. To the World Bank (2016), empowerment refers to the process of enhancing the capacity of people, groups or institutions to enable them make decisions and transform such decisions into outcomes and actions that are desired. This involves the expansion of the capabilities and assets of people within a society to enable them participate in, negotiate with, control, influence and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.

Mohapatra and Sundaray (2018) have taken a different perspective. They define empowerment as the uplifting of the members of an institution through the provision of autonomy that allows them to make decisions of their own, which ultimately leads to different positive outcomes, better institutional performance being part of it. The UN (2012) views empowerment as the processes of enabling individuals to gain control over factors which influence their lives, to build their capacities to gain access to networks, partners and a voice as a way of shaping and gaining control over their lives. Nikkah and Redzuan (2009) defined empowerment as the process of change through which people or groups with little or no power obtain the power and ability to make choices that have an influence on their lives. What is common in all the foregoing definitions is that all of them view empowerment in terms of provision of autonomy and freedom that enables a people, group, or institution to operate at liberty, and to make independent decisions on matters related to their wellbeing. In the context of this inquiry, however, empowerment of the National Parliament as a public institution implies making the DRC Parliament strong, and building its capacity of influence. It also includes solidifying and equipping the Parliamentarians by giving them autonomy, control and power to effectively discharge their activities and attain the goals and objectives that they desire, for example good governance, which is a prerequisite for sustainable development.

Empowerment as a Concept

The use of the term empowerment has become ubiquitous in the sphere of social development and has often been identified as the answer to most of the problems within a society (Chaudhuri, 2016). Aghazamani and Hunt (2017) have argued that the term empowerment lacks a clear definition and scholars often use the concept in a narrow way when they base the concept on their program or specific scholarly discipline. Martinez, Morales, Maso, and Bernet (2017) observed that as a

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concept, empowerment remains an ambiguous and complex term with no well-established boundaries, and therefore applicable to varying situations and processes. Already literature indicates a wide use of the term such as women empowerment (Huis, Hansen, Otten, & Lensink, 2017), youth empowerment (Christens & Peterson, 2012; Morton & Montgomery, 2012), economic empowerment (Govindaraj, 2018), employee empowerment (Hanaysha, 2016; Kumar & Kumar 2017), political empowerment (Alexander, Bolzendahl & Jalalzai, 2016; Dieleman & Andersson, 2016) and structural empowerment (Hagerman, Högberg, Skytt, Wadensten, & Engström, 2017). This shows that empowerment as a concept has received widespread use in social research, which suggests that it is a powerful and attractive construct. As a result, empowerment is popularly used as a tool to address issues of poor governance, poverty and underdevelopment (World Bank, 2016). Empowerment has also been closely associated with sustainable development outcomes. Ki-Moon (2012) noted in his address as the United Nations Secretary General, that empowerment was essential to achieving sustainable development among other outcomes. Additionally, the World Bank (2016) observed that no single model for empowerment exists as the context in which it is being applied determines the manner in which it will be implemented. As indicated in literature, empowerment as a concept is anchored on the context of application. In line with this wide application, this study focusses on empowerment of the National Parliament as a tool to enhance good governance for a sustainable development of the DRC.

Benefits of an Empowered Parliament

Evidence in literature reveals that empowered parliaments have a strong association with good governance and sustainable development across different societies in the world (GOPAC, 2018). Strong national parliaments ensure that proper oversight practices are secured in the fundamental state structures, laws, constitution and parliaments' own procedural rules (Juncker et al., 2015). Empowered parliaments are bequeathed with adequate human, financial and capacitation resources that enable them to oversee executive functions and control these resources in an independent way (Adiputri, 2018). Bonenberg and Kaplinski (2018) have argued that an empowered parliament improves the quality of governance in a society and as a result ensures that development occurs in a sustainable manner. Additionally, the need for ensuring that the national parliaments are solidified and work effectively has resulted in concerted efforts to promote strong and empowered parliaments as key public institutions around the world (GOPAC, 2018).

In Europe, Denmark is built on a parliamentary system of governance. Their parliament is empowered with the mandate to oversee the activities of those in government and keep them accountable to the electors. Denmark's system has promoted a culture of civility, rule of law, liberty, accountability and good governance (Laursen, Andersen & Jahn, 2017). The Danish constitution has given its parliament power to protect citizen liberties and freedoms, which are enforced and respected, and for a long time, the country has been ranked among the top in civil liberties and political rights (Laursen, Andersen & Jahn, 2017). The Danish parliament is independent from state manipulation which has given the institution autonomy in the conduct of parliamentary business. The independence of the Danish National Parliament has given the institution power to oversee the executive, protect the rights of the citizens and ensure freedoms and political rights are protected in the country (Laursen, Andersen & Jahn, 2017). Additionally, Denmark is ranked top among the least corrupt countries on earth, according to TI (2018). This has consequently contributed to a culture of good governance in Denmark that is the foundation of sustainable development of the country.

In Germany, the constitution ensures a parliament whose members are elected in free, equal, fair and secret elections which is a major prerequisite for an empowered parliament (Friedbert et

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al., 2017). Germany also has a parliamentary council for sustainable development which is in charge of supervising the government's sustainability strategies (Friedbert et al., 2017). This council, which is reconstituted after every parliamentary election, has moderate political influence in its activities. This has made the council a strong advocate for long term development practices by the government (Friedbert et al., 2017). Therefore, Germany has one of the strongest parliaments in the developed world that has promoted a culture of good governance and development in the country.

In Africa, Ghana recognizes the National Parliament as a key public institution that is responsible for providing oversight over the Executive and restraining the Executive from carrying out acts that are beyond its mandate (Draman et al., 2017). The electoral process is regarded as open and fair and governance of the country by those in power is based on transparency, participation by citizens, accountability and use of modern technologies for good governance (Draman et al., 2017). The Ghanaian National Parliament provides strong oversight over the Executive and other public institutions that has promoted a culture of good governance in the country. Botchway (2018) opined that Ghana is on a good path, marching towards consolidating its democracy, improving the quality of governance and thus ensuring sustainable development. Additionally, Ghana continues to enjoy a good reputation of having one of the most stable democracies on the African continent (Botchway, 2018). This has resulted in Ghana being regarded as a beacon of democracy and good governance on the African Continent.

In Botswana, there is a parliamentary democracy which has resulted in government functions being conducted in a democratic manner. Elections in Botswana are free, fair and transparent, and the government is responsive to the needs of the electorate (Lewin, 2018). Botswana has empowered watchdog institutions such as the Ombudsman, anti-corruption parliament and an independent electoral commission. The Constitution in Botswana, empowers the parliament to inspect and report on how public accounts have been used in all departments and parastatals in government (Sebudubudu, 2010). The country has a strong and empowered National Parliament that is effective in discharging its activities (Lewin, 2018). The executive is thus kept in proper check by the National Parliament which has promoted a culture of good governance that has impacted on development and poverty reduction in Botswana.

However, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, public institutions, notably the National Parliament is undermined and largely controlled by the Executive (Shephard, 2014). The National Parliament has failed to shape political discourses largely because of a lack of institutional frameworks and incapacitation (Afoaku, 2010). Parliamentarians lack adequate staff, facilities and have insufficient budgets to effectively do their work (Trefon, 2013). Trefon further argued that there is a persistence of parliamentary powerlessness and as a result, it has failed to adequately provide oversight over the Executive among other mandated constitutional obligations. In analyzing the Congolese Parliament, Afoaku (2010) realized that the opposition in the parliament is not only weak in capacity but highly fragmented, which has made parliament to be ineffective in challenging the ruling coalition. The oversight role that parliament was tasked to do is almost non-existent in the Congolese Parliament as noted by Trefon (2013). It is can thus be concluded that the DRC National Parliament is seriously disempowered structurally.

The Concept of Governance

Various scholars have spoken and written about governance; everyone however seem to define it according to their context, or what they want to achieve. Therefore, governance has received various definitions in existing literature with authors aiming to explain what governance entails.

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What is Governance?

According to Keping (2018) governance refers to the sum of the different ways in which individuals and institutions, private and public, conduct the management of common affairs. It encompasses formal institutions and regimes, which have been given the power to enforce compliance as well as informal arrangements that institutions and people have either agreed to or deemed to be in their best interest. Fukuyama (2013) defined governance as the ability of a government of making and enforcing rules in order to deliver services, regardless of whether such a government is democratic or not. Raadschelders (2003) viewed governance as all organizations and institutions concerned with how a society is structured, including both governmental and non-governmental actors, as well as independent agencies, without dominance of any one of them.

Kjar (2004) referred to governance as the capacity of a government to both make and implement policies that are aimed at steering a society in a particular direction. Adetiba and Rahm (2012) similarly defined governance as the ability to exercise political, economic and administrative authority in order to manage the affairs of a country at all levels.

Governance as a Concept

Governance as a concept has received a lot of debates in growing literature, and is becoming a domain that is under more focus across different countries. Further, due to growth in democratic societies in the world, the need for good governance is quickly becoming the benchmark of judging the level of credibility of societies around the world (Iyoha et al., 2015). Vries (2014) aptly observed that governance as a concept encompasses new and different phenomena that are related with the steering of development in a society. Originally, governance was seen as a replacement for government where development of a society was left to societal actors who had to use networks rather than hierarchy in achieving societal development. The role of government and creation of strong institutions by the government has only recently found new importance in societies. Katsamuniska (2016) has pointed out that the major reason for the growth in popularity of governance as a concept when compared with the narrower term of government, is its capacity of covering the whole range of institutions and the relationships that are encompassed in the process of governing.

Adetiba and Rahim (2012) contended that governance encompasses three major dimensions of being: political, economic or administrative. Political governance entails the process of making decisions and formulating policies that aim at preventing and reducing inter and intra-state conflict. It also promotes constitutional democracy including free and fair elections and safeguards the rule of law and the protection of human rights. Economic governance involves the process of making decisions on the economic activities of a country and the relationship it has with other economies. On its part, administrative governance entails a system of implementing policies and promoting efficiency and accountability of people holding public offices (Guga, 2014; Adetiba & Rahim, 2012).

Governance is a process and not a set of rules or an activity. Governance as a process is based on coordination and not control; and it entails both private as well as public sectors and is a continuing interaction and not a formal institution. Both the governor and the governed must be involved in the process of governance (Iyoha et al., 2015; Kehinde et al., 2016). There is a growing consensus that governance needs to be good which has given birth to the concept of good governance. To determine whether any governance is good, it is essential to examine the mechanisms which promote it, the type of process used, and the outcomes that have been achieved (UNDP, 2014). Good governance mechanisms include democratic and transparent institutions together with effective and efficient public services. Governance process involves level of

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participation and inclusion in social, economic and political activities in a society where every voice is heard when making decisions (UNDP, 2005). Outcomes from good governance include peaceful, resilient and stable societies where services that reflect the needs of communities are delivered, with the voices of those who are most vulnerable and poor being included in decision making (UNDP, 2014).

Grindle (2008) argued that many citizens of developing countries would be much better off, if public activities were conducted in institutions that were judicious, fair, transparent, participatory, accountable, well-managed, responsive and efficient. For many people across the world who live each day in conditions of instability, public insecurity, abuse of law, corruption, public service failure, inequality and poverty, good governance represents a great beacon of hope. Keping (2018) posited that governance entails the exercising of authority to ensure that order is maintained and meets the needs demanded by the public within a certain range that is acceptable. The aim of governance is guiding, steering and regulating the activities of citizens through varying systems of power and relations in order to maximize the interest of the public (Fukuyama, 2013; Grindle, 2017).

Research method

This was a descriptive study. Data was collected from the Members of Parliament who were elected by the citizens of DR Congo. The respondents were divided in 3 groups of 12 members; an interview guide was used to collect data. Data was cleaned and presented in themes, and presented in tables.

Findings of the study

Objective 02:1) to investigate what the members of parliament doing to empower DR Congo. The respondents showed determination in trying to empower the national parliament in DR Congo. For example, some members pushed for the parliament to have its own budget (16.6%); while (8.6%) wanted the parliament to employ adequate staff; about (19%) of the members were pushing for the parliament to control its own calendar. However, the majority of the members of parliament (55.5%) wanted the members of parliament to have freedom of speech that is guaranteed immunity in their legislations. The summary of these findings are tabulated in Table 01.

Table 01: Members of Parliament Efforts to Empower DRC Congo

Members of parliament efforts	Frequency	Percentage
Parliament to control its own budget	6	16.6
Parliament to have adequate staff	3	8.6
Members of parliament to have freedom of speech	20	55.5
Parliament to control its calendar	7	19
Total	36	100

Source: Authors 2020

The study found that most of the members of parliament (55.5%) considered having freedom of speech during their legislation in parliament to be the most important thing in enhancing the empowerment of the parliament in DR Congo. When probed what they meant by freedom of speech, they explained that it meant having immunity in all their deliberations in parliament even during the plenary groups. One of the respondents had this to say,

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Members of parliament must have freedom of speech; that is to say we should have immunity during our legislation including the deliberations in the plenary groups or committees. The executives or their cronies should not try to muzzle anybody no matter what they say; sometimes we may say things that are not in line with the ruling party; one's opinions must be respected.

This implies that the executive controls a majority of activities that happen in the National Parliament. The Parliamentarians feel insecure because their movements are monitored and they are also denied the freedom to carry out their mandate without interference from outside. Therefore, the situation above calls for an empowered Parliament, which is well equipped with all the necessities including resources, freedom, security among others in order to serve the Congolese people properly.

These findings concur with Trefon (2013) and Samndong and Nhantumbo (2015) who found that the DRC National Parliament is controlled by the executive who decides who becomes a Member of Parliament and how they work. Having sold their conscience to the executive because of money, members of Parliament are left powerless, but to comply with the demands of the executive, this explains why the country is mismanagement at the watch of the Parliament. No motion of censure of a minister, or a member of the government has ever been passed at the floor of the house. Every decision in the house is made according to the directives given by the executive, as it is impossible to tell as slave to make independent decisions. It is just business as usual while anti-values practices have left the country crippled in poverty, and the DRC counted among the poorest nations on the planet earth despite all the wealth found in it.

Objective 02: 2) Determine the challenges faced by the members of parliament in DR Congo when attempting to empower the national parliament.

According to this study, empowerment of the DR Congo national parliament has not been easy; the members of parliament cited many challenges; about (50%) of the members of parliament blamed corruption worst challenge against empowerment of the DR Congo national parliament; (22%) blamed lack of clear separation of powers as a huge challenge too; finally (28%) cited negative ethnicity as a serious challenge against empowerment of the DR Congo parliament. The findings are summarized in Table 02.

Table 02: the challenges experienced by the members of parliament in attempting to empower the DR Congo national parliament

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage
Corruption among the members	18	50
Lack of clear separation of powers	8	22
Negative ethnicity	10	28
Total	36	100

Source: Authors 2020

According to the findings, the worst impediment was corruption among the members of parliament whereby whenever an important voting or decisions was to be made they were bribed to vote with the executive. One of the members of parliament had this to say about corruption while expressing his disappointment,

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The first time it came to my mind to join the Parliament, I believed that I was going to the National Parliament to change things, fight corruption, dictatorship and most anti-values behaviors experienced in the government. I thought I would use the institution of Parliament to change things. But, when I went to the Parliament, I found a totally different environment with strange realities which changed my resolves. People took bribes to vote in favour with the executive or to defeat bills from the opposition MPs in parliament.

The majority of MPs are corrupt from inception. They are sponsored by the executive, given money to do campaigns in order to become MPs. Therefore, in the house of parliament, these members do not represent the interests of the people but of the one who paved their way to parliament. Thus, the vetting of people who aspire to become members of parliament is paramount to ensure that only qualified people become members of parliament. Bhuiyan and Amagoh (2012) found that that responsible public institutions conduct themselves in a manner that is fundamentally free from corruption and abuse and based on the rule of law. Similar findings were reported by McCloskey (2010); Nibishaka (2011); Matti (2010); Chene (2014) and Bojang (2017) who found corruption and blatant theft in the DR Congo has negatively affected good governance practices for sustainable development.

Sustainable development in the DR Congo will not be realized when the deep-rooted culture of corruption remains untamed. This is because corruption has impeded transparency in government institutions particularly the National Parliament. Further, the institutional framework is dysfunctional which has significantly contributed to the spread of corruption. A corrupt parliament is unable to make good laws, promote social justice, cohesion and national unity which are main pillars in sustainable development (McCloskey, 2010; Nibishaka, 2011).

Objective 03: 3) To establish how an empowered national parliament is essential in promoting sustainable development in DR Congo.

The respondents had consensus (100%) that an empowered national parliament was essential in promoting good governance in order to attain a sustainable development of the country. What was lacking among them was the political will to serve the citizens, integrity, whereby they look their electorates into the eyes and reject the bribe offered by the executive, Sacrifice is also an important element if the DRC will overcome the hindrances towards an empowered national parliament; this issue was discussed to conclusion in objective 01.

Table 03: Effectiveness of an empowered parliament in promoting sustainable development

Effectiveness	Frequency	Percentage
Making relevant laws and Policies	14	39
Giving oversight to other institutions	7	19
Promoting justice and national unity	9	25
Long-term development solutions	6	17
Total	36	100

Source: Authors 2020

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The findings underscored the effectiveness of empowered parliament in driving sustainable development (39%) of the respondents said it had enhanced capacity to make relevant laws and policies; these are critical in realization of good/sustainable development because they promote: Inclusivity, equity, fairness, fair distribution of resources and social justice as shared by one of the respondents in Kinshasa who said:

Only very few people have benefited from the DRC's scandalous natural resources, the majority of the population are crippled in misery, and nobody is coming to the people's rescue.

An empowered parliament is good because it promotes good governance which enhances inclusivity of all ethnic communities in national development agenda, equity, fairness, fair distribution of resources and social justice as shared by one of the respondents. The empowered parliament brings stability in the country because the voices of the people are represented by the members of parliament, and the citizens have cohesion since they are treated in the same way, and have equal opportunities in access and control.

The parliament is the singular institution for driving sustainable development in any country, when it goes down by being compromise; the country will also go down (UNDP, 2014; Grindle, 2008; Fukuya, 2013). Therefore, it will take empowered parliaments in Africa to promote sustainable development. The members of parliament need to take charge in promoting and defending the sanctity of parliament as institution; these ideas were discussed in objective 01 and 02.

- 1) The efforts by the members of parliament doing in empowering the national parliament in DR Congo need to be strengthened by all the stakeholders for better results
- 2) The challenges faced by the members of parliament in DR Congo when attempting to empower the national parliament need to be faced by a wider consortium of actors and solved to make the institution effective in sustainable development
- 3) The empowered national parliament is essential in promoting sustainable development in DR Congo needs to be documented and strengthened for better results in promoting sustainable development.

Conclusion

The members of parliament and the institution of parliament have a unique opportunity, and a significant constitutional responsibility to make good laws and policies for the promotion of sustainable development. For instance, good laws promote peaceful coexistence and inclusive environment for the societies to work together and realization of sustainable development. Furthermore, an empowered parliament provides access to justice for all the citizens; in turn, the environment promotes developing of healthy institutions which enhance effectiveness, accountability and inclusivity at all levels in the society and nation. By taking a leading role; an empowered parliament is able to realize and nurture sustainable development.

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Recommendations

The study makes several recommendations that are aimed at strengthening the National Parliament of the Democratic Republic of Congo in order to promote good governance which will in return lead to the achievement of a sustainable development of the country.

- a) Vetting: The study recommends that thorough vetting be applied to every person aspiring the work of Member of Parliament. A Member of Parliament must be a person of integrity, patriotic, with clean proven record, of not being corrupt, and with good ethics.
- b) CENI: any person aspiring to become a member of The Independent National Electoral Commission must go through a serious vetting in public, and the person must be accepted by all the stake holders, the ruling party, the opposition parties, and the civil society.
- c) All the administrative equipment like offices, computers, security, vehicles, offices, and adequate staff be given to the National Parliament members to enable them to discharge their duties effectively.
- d) Financial and functional autonomy must be given to the Parliament for a smooth running of the institution.
- e) The Congolese National Parliament must benchmark with what other countries in the region and around the world are doing.
- f) Training of members of Parliament on how they should discharge their work with competence and skill will be crucial to strengthening of the institution.

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